



## WHAT ARE THEY BUYING IN PRIVATE TUITION? MICRO-LEVEL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRACTICE OF PRIVATE TUITION BY GRADE 9 STUDENTS IN KALE TOWNSHIP, MYANMAR

**Kam Tung Tuang Suante<sup>i</sup>**

Master Student, Institute of Comparative and  
International Education, Beijing Normal University, China

### **Abstract:**

Private tuition is the practice of academic teaching and learning from outside of the school hour with a fee, but a few studies acknowledged what private tuition provides to the receivers beyond the teaching of academic subjects. In this study, the data were subtracted from 1119 Grade 9 students' survey reports and 18 interviewees' responses from Kale Township, Myanmar. The study revealed 88% of the students receive different forms of private tuition and 69.1% of them are in private boarding tuition. Besides, the paper highlighted students receive supportive environment for their learning in private tuition in addition to the academic teachings.

**Keywords:** private tuition, private tutoring, shadow education, Myanmar, learning environment, high school

### **1. Introduction**

Private tuition or private tutoring is an educational service from outside of the common school practiced by students. The term refers to the teaching and learning of school curricula from outside of the school hours with a fee. The phenomenon was first common in South and East Asian countries such as Sri Lanka (Bray & Lykins, 2012), Japan (Stevenson & Baker, 1992), South Korea (Lee, Lee, & Jang, 2010). However, the international development of the phenomenon is significant in many studies such as: in African countries (Paviot, Heinsohn, & Korkman, 2008), in eastern European countries

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [petersuante@qq.com](mailto:petersuante@qq.com)

and central Asian countries (Silova, 2010), in Asian countries (Bray, M., & Kwo, 2014; Bray & Lykins, 2012), and others (Bray, 2009, p.23). Although some studies on private tuition included the teaching of extracurricular activities such as music, sport, and art, this paper explicitly refers private tuition as the purchase of core school subject teachings from outside of the school hour.

Generally, researchers agreed on the intention of receiving private tuition as to get something that home or/and the school did not provide sufficiently to the students. Many studies hypothesized students' intention to receive private tuition as to get academic skills. However, it was inconclusive that whether or not private tuition can benefit students' academic performance. Some studies asserted the positive relationship between private tuition and students' academic achievement (Dang & Rogers, 2008; Cayubit et al., 2014; Zheng, 2015), while some argued that there is no significant correlation in it (Cheo & Quah, 2005; Thapa, 2011; Zhang & Liu, 2016; Bray & Lykins, 2012). Whatever, whether or not the private tuition brings to academic achievement to students, the development of the phenomenon is obvious internationally both in scale and intensity. This highlights to concern more factors beyond academic teaching in receiving private tuition. On the other hand, most studies emphasize on what students intense to receive in private tuition but a few studies have been done in the approach from what private tuition provides to the receivers. Bray, Kwo, & Jokić (2015) suggested that research from different angles is necessary for the better understanding of the process of private tuition. Thus, this study aims to explore what the private tuition provides to the receivers beyond what the receivers try to get in it in order to contribute more theoretical approaches to the study of private tuition.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Myanmar is a country in Southeast Asia with about 53 million populations within 676,578 km square area. It has about 9.7 million of students and .36 million of teachers in basic education (MOE, 2017). Basic education consists of primary, middle and high school levels, and the student-teacher ratios in 2017 are 23:1, 28:1 and 22:1 school respectively. The school system is Kg+10 in structure which means one year of Kindergarten (Kg), 4 years for primary, 4 years for middle and 2 years for high school. The entry age for Kg is 5-year-old and a student can complete basic education at age of 16 if he/she did not need to repeat any grade. The government declared free basic education system and used more than 6% of the total government expenditure for education in 2015-2016 fiscal years (MOE, 2017). Currently, the government is trying to implement Kg+12 education system since 2016-2017 Academic Year (AY). The first semester of the school calendar starts on 1<sup>st</sup> June and has about one week of holiday

before the second-semester start in October. Generally, the school was closed after the summative test at the end of March to until the end of May. The formal school bell generally starts at 9:00 AM and ends at 3:30 PM. The school curriculum emphasizes too much on academic learning while the extracurricular activities represent only 10%-12% of the school curriculum. Each high school class session lasts 45 minutes and there are only 45 minutes in a day for nonacademic works such as moral/civics, vocational/agriculture, physical education/life skill, aesthetic education, and school activity/computer (National Curriculum Review in Myanmar, 2013). Except from Grade 1 and Grade 2, students need to take examinations for each class promotion and only scores from core academic subjects are accounted for class promotion. This means the school system does not consider any performance scores of extracurricular activities such as sport, music, and art for any class promotion. Students from Grade 4, Grade 8, and Grade 10 have public examination system for the next level of educational chance (Note: the public examination system for Grade 4 and Grade 8 are implemented since 2015 and current high school students did not experience it in their Grade 4). The school completion rates at each level of education are 73.8% in the primary, 74.2% in middle school, and 31% in high school respectively (National EFA Review Report, 2014). This shows many students did not graduate from the school and it is more dramatic among high school students than others. This would be because of the high-stake matriculation examination in the end of Grade 10. Scores from the matriculation examination are the only criterion for higher education admission. The higher scorers likely to get higher prestigious professional tertiary schools. Because of such system, high school students have a high pressure to pass the exam with high scores and parents also invest many efforts for it.

Hence, this study focuses on high school students and their experiences on private tuition. Private tuition, as well, has been significantly developing in Myanmar since more than three decades ago. The “Private Academic Teaching Law” enacted by the parliament in 1984 proved the widespread use of private tuition in Myanmar since that time. Gibson (1992) revealed 91% of high school students and 65% of middle school students from Yangon were participating in different forms of private tuition. Although he acknowledged the potential magnitude of private tuition in Myanmar, his paper lacked to provide the nature of it. As well, little knowledge has been revealed about the private tuition system in Myanmar.

## **2. Literature Review**

The practice of private tuition has widespread to the nations and its implication to public education and society is significant for both researchers and policymakers. Therefore, studies need to pay careful attention to the nature and process of private tuition from different perspectives and contexts. This study focuses on the micro-level process of private tuition in Myanmar and presents a brief discussion on the factors affecting on it.

### **2.1. Factors Affecting Private Tuition**

As the individual is different, students and parents do not always have the same intention in receiving private tuition. Some of the students would receive private tuition because of their own will while others might receive it because of their environmental influences. Bray (2009) asserted that private tuition primarily evolved to supplement students' works relating to school works but it is not always a supportive of students. Receiving extensive private tuition can even cause stress to students and can also disturb school functioning.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon has been developing abundantly, and its implications cannot be separated from the mainstream education system. Bray (2009) asserted that private tuition is the product of public education system and its functions are also relating to the school. As well, the deficiency of school structures such as exam-orientation, big class size, and quality of teachers are always the excuses for the expanding of private tuition. Many researchers agreed on high stake examination as one of the leading factors in receiving private tuition (Gibson, 1992; Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Bray, 2009; Lee et al., 2010; Zhang & Bray, 2016). They concluded that too much emphasis on competitive cultures such as school grading, competitive school admission and reputation both in school and society likely nourish the development of private tuition.

However, there is doubt in asserting factors such as large class size and quality of teachers as the leading factors of private tuition. Bray and Lykins (2012) claimed that many of private tuitions also have large classes and some private tuitions even provide in the huge lecture halls. Of course, some students might receive private tuition because of the formal classes are overcrowded, but it would not be the total factor of receiving private tuition. Similarly, private tuitions do not always seem to have better teaching and knowledge skills than school. Bray and Lykins (2012) remarked that parents do not stop of sending their children to private tuition although they knew private tutors cannot improve students' academic performance. On the other hand, people will no

longer go to private tuition when they perceive it cannot provide any benefit for them. This highlights the needs to explore factors which can keep students in private tuition beyond the intention to improve academic performance.

The above statement dictates as students receive private tuition not because of the school quality is dropping but because of other factors are influencing to them. Lee et al. (2010) concern the increasing of parents' and students' doubt on academic learning without private tuition, and the competitive culture in the society as the causation of private tuition. This means parents and students are dominated by factors such as uncertainty and anxiety for the future. Seemingly, some students receive private tuition in order to cure their anxiety for exam and grade. Bray (2009) asserted private tuition can increase students' self-confident for learning, while a study also revealed parents have an aim to promote their child's self-confident for learning through providing private tuition (Ireson & Rushforth, 2011). Nonetheless, such assertions still need to enrich with how the private tuition help students' self-confident for learning.

In addition, the intentions in receiving private tuition are not always for academic learning. In some occasions, parents provided private tuition without concerning the needs of their children (Lee, 2014) and to have a good relationship with teachers (Kobakhidze, 2014). Zhang (2013) also reported some parents sent their children to private tuition just because of other parents did it, and some parents have a traditional belief about children can develop better under the supervision of their teachers than parents' control. In this sense, some private tutors provided services such as living and feeding systems to welcome students to live under their supervision (Zhang, 2013). This shows the provision of private tuition not only aims for subject learning but also for behavioral guidance.

Students also have different intentions in receiving private tuition. One cannot generalize all students receive private tuition just for academic performance and to improve their exam scores. Studies revealed that students go to private tuition because their friends are in private tuition (Lee et al., 2010; Zhang, 2013) or as a process of time management skills (Jheng, 2015). As well, some students receive it in order to have a better relationship with their school teachers (Zhang, 2013). Thus, one cannot hope to see private tuition as simply as academic learning centre and to prepare for the examination. Besides, further studies need to explore what and how kind of the provisions in private tuition can satisfy their customers with different needs.

In sum, academic literature relating to private tuition in Myanmar context is weak even though the phenomenon has been developed since decades ago. Many studies in regard of the development of private tuition are still inconclusive. Students and parents seem to have different demands in receiving private tuition while private

tuition, itself, seems to have a different vision in providing it. As well, little knowledge has been developed of how and what private tuitions balance the different demands of its customers. Since private tuition needs further research from different perspectives and contexts, this study focuses on the magnitude, intensity and the provisions of private tuition beyond the academic teaching in Kale township.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Focus of the Study and Instrument**

The study used mixed research design and the instrument was adopted from Bray and Kwo (2015) that has been used in Hong Kong context. The general purpose of this study is to investigate what private tuition provides to students beyond what students intend to receive in it. The study chose high school students from Kale Township because high school (Grade 9 and Grade 10) is crucial as the transition edge to tertiary school. However, Grade 10 students were having private study at their homes and/or private tuitions, and they were not available during this study. Kale Township situates on the boundary of Chin State and Sagaing Region in the Northwest part of Myanmar.

The instrument was first adjusted to the local context through experts' suggestions. It excluded concepts such as "tutor king and queen" and "nationality". Then, the questionnaire was translated into Burmese version and sent to two basic school teachers to review whether or not it was clear enough to understand. Throughout feedbacks and suggestions from experts and the two teachers, the instrument was revised and prepared for pilot testing.

#### **3.2 Sampling Design and Data Collection**

The study was conducted through the permission of Township Education Office (TEO) and it used purposive sampling design in order to balance ethnic distribution among the sample. The pilot testing was made with 99 students at one high school in Kale Township which included 76% of Chin ethnic students. It was because Chin ethnic dominated most regions and it needed to ensure whether or not Chin ethnic students had problems in the questionnaire which was in Burmese version. The questionnaire was finalized through lessons from pilot testing and it included 21 items.

The study selected 3 rural and 6 urban schools through balancing ethnic distribution. More schools were selected from urban areas because urban has more high schools than rural. Besides, one student who received private tuition and one who did not receive it in Grade 9 were interviewed from each school. The research encouraged voluntary participation and each participant's personal data was kept in confidentiality.

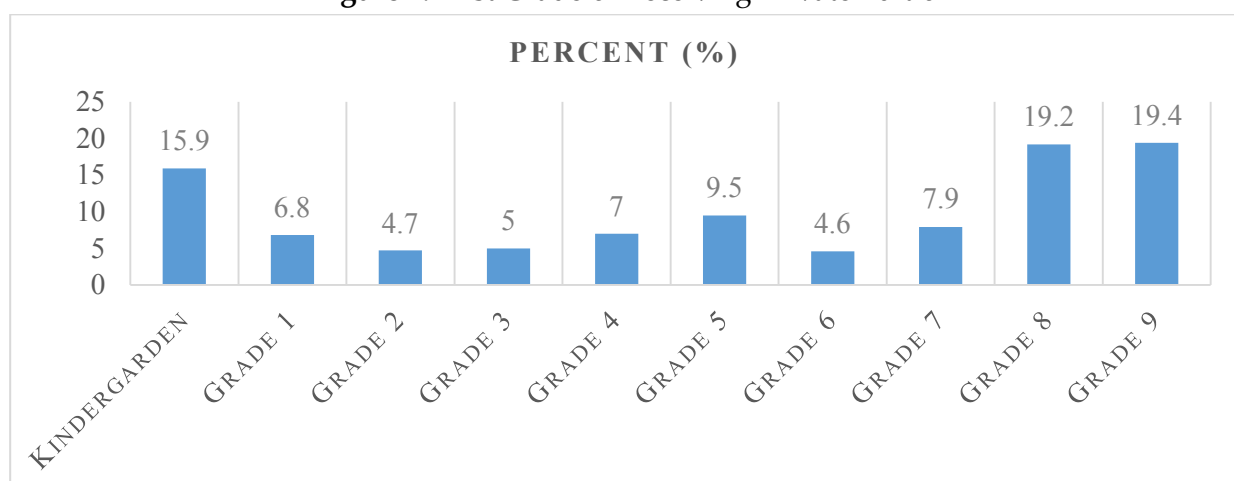
As well, pseudonym systems were used in the report. In total, 1119 students responded the survey questionnaire well and 18 students were interviewed from them. Each student spent about 30 minutes to complete the survey questionnaire and the interview took about 15 minutes per one person. The sample involved 53.6% of Chin ethnic students, 45.1% of Burmese ethnic students and 1.3% of the other ethnic groups. Also, 68.5% and 31.5% of the sample represented urban and rural students respectively. The survey data were coded and analyzed with SPSS v23, and the interview data were transcribed and analyzed through Nvivo 10. The data collection and analysis took the total of two months in general

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Scale of private tuition

This study aims to explore the intensity and nature of private tuition in Kale Township. Among the 1119 participants, 1010 (90.3%) students stated they have had experience of private tuition and 15 students missed to respond whether or not they receive it in Grade 9. Among 1104 who responded whether or not they receive private tuition in Grade 9, 971 (88%) students reported that they are receiving private tuition. In addition, 88.5% of Chin students, 87.6% of Burmese students, and 71.5% of others ethnic students are participating in private tuition. However, there is no significant relationship in receiving private tuition and ethnicity. On the other hand, 83.4% of rural and 90.1% of urban students are receiving private tuition in Grade 9. The statistics also proved that students in urban areas are more likely to participate in private tuition than rural areas ( $p < .01$ ). Following diagram shows students' firstly experienced Grade of receiving private tuition.

**Figure 1: First Grade of Receiving Private Tuition**



Among students who had experiences of private tuition, 161(15.9%) students started to receive it in their Kindergarten (KG), and 153 of them (95%) still receive private tuition in Grade 9. This shows students who received private tuition since their earlier school-aged time are likely to receive private tuition in high school. As well, 80.6% of Grade 9 students already had experience of private tuition before they were in high school. The number of students who started to receive private tuition increased suddenly when students were at Grade 8. This is because Grade 8 is the transition grade from middle to high school and it has public examination system. This highlights the number of private tuition receivers increased when there is high stake examination for class promotion. Moreover, the interviewees reported that students who started to receive private tuition in Grade 9 have intention to prepare for the coming high-stake examination by the end of Grade 10. It means even though there is not a public examination in Grade 9, the number of private tuition receivers increased because students perceived Grade 9 as the preparation stage for the next grade (Grade 10). As it has been mentioned, exam scores that students will get in the matriculation examination or Grade 10 are critical for students' higher education admission. Only students who got highest scores from matriculation examination can get high prestigious professional universities. This would link to the reason of high private tuition receivers among high school students.

#### **4.2 Forms of Private Tuition**

The study classifies private tuition received by Grade 9 students into five main categories as one to one, small group, large group, boarding tuition and others (see Table 1). The Internet and corresponding tutoring cannot find in this study. It would be because of poor internet connection and poor mailing system. One to one private tuition form means a form of private tuition received by only a student and provided by one or more teacher(s). This kind of private tuition happens in a student's house or the provider(s)' home. It can be the teaching of one subject or all subjects. The local terms this form of private tuition as "guide tuition" because its primary aim is to guide student's learning as a guardian. Therefore, the teaching and learning process in one to one private tuition form emphasizes the guidance of student's learning instead of lecturing school curriculum. This can happen both daytime and night. The fee to receive this form is often higher than other forms because it is special teaching/guidance to only one student. Although this is very special for the receivers, the statistics indicate this form is the least common form of private tuition among Grade 9 students (Table 1). The reason would be because of the price is high to afford by normal family and/or the boredom of receiving private tuition alone.



**Table 1:** Number and Percentage of Students in Different Forms of Private Tuition

Form of Private Tuition	Frequency	Percentage
One to One	9	.9
Small Group	82	8.4
Large Group	191	19.7
Boarding Tuition	671	69.1
Others	18	1.9
Total	971	100

The second form is small group private tuition. The local termed this form of private tuition as “*wiin* tuition” where “*wiin*” means “round or circle”. This is because small group private tuition includes a few students with the teacher(s), and their teaching style is similar to a roundtable discussion among teacher(s) and students. As well, this form of private tuition does not focus on lecturing students excessively. The process can be private teaching and learning of a subject or all subjects. The form includes both teachings of school lessons and guidance at study time. During these days, there is also “special *wiin* tuition” classified through the price and number of the receivers. “Special *wiin* tuition” receivers are often less than five persons in one group. However, current research combined all small group private tuition forms under one content. Among them, only 15 (24.2%) students stated their group includes equal and less than 5 students, 57 (75.8%) students stated their groups included 6 to 25 students, and the rests did not provide the number of students in their groups. Generally, the price to receive small group private tuition is cheaper than one to one private tuition form. Thus, the reason of more receivers in this form than one to one private tuition form would be the cheaper in price and/or students can make more friends in there.

The third form of private tuition is the practice of private tuition by many students in a class or hall. This private tuition form does not have a limitation in population for a class and commonly provides all subjects. In addition, this form is the provision of private tuition by school teachers to their own students. Commonly, private tutors in this form just have a responsibility to provide lectures and do not have guidance session at study time. However, some large private tuition forms, as well, provide guidance in students’ study time. The local termed this form as “*Yoeyoe* tuition” where “*Yoeyoe*” means “simple or formal”. The price to receive this form of private tuition is not as high as one to one and small group private tuition forms. Besides, this form is the second largest form of private tuition in this study and it would be because of the provision by school teachers and the flexible price.

The fourth form of private the tuition is private boarding tuition. This is a common private tuition form in this study and more than two-thirds of private tuition

receivers are in there. This form provides all subjects to students. The local termed this form as “boarding or *Asuang* tuition” where “*Asuang*” means “hostel, dormitory or boarding system”. This is because it combines both private tuition and boarding systems. Beyond lecture classes and night study, it provides accommodation and feeding system for students. Students who receive private boarding tuition need to live according to the arrangement of their private boarding tuition. Such provision is also convenient for students who are from other places/regions but seeking to enroll in urban/better schools. This form can help to solve difficulties for students who have challenges for a living and/or transportation to school and can provide extra teaching and guidance in study time. For the teaching and learning, private boarding tuition often has two kinds of private tutors known as teaching tutor and guide tutor. These tutors have different responsibilities. The teaching tutors have a responsibility to come and teach in the private tuition classes according to the timetable of the private boarding tuition. The private boarding tuition classes often have large students in one class and their teaching tutors are public school teachers, private professional tutors, and university lecturers. On the other hand, guide tutors are often university students and people who graduated from high school or university. Guide tutors have responsibility to look whether or not students pay close attention to the lecturing by the teaching tutors in private tuition classes, to take care when students go to school and to bring back all of them together after school, to guide and explain students' homework and learning at study time, to restrict each student to follow the boarding tuition's disciplines, and to do other works relating to the students and boarding tuition. Sometimes, guide tutors are as agents to meet students' parents for students' needs; as advertisers to recruit students through making advertisements such as poster sticking on the billboards or public areas, making pamphlet distribution, and as servants to do miscellaneous things relating to the private tuition. Through the provision of services as teaching, accommodation, and guidance at study time, the price to receive private boarding is nearly equal to small group private tuition forms (some boarding tuition are as expensive as one to one private tuition form). However, it can provide more services than other private tuition forms and this would be the reason why many students receive it.

The final category of private tuition in this study includes two different cases. The first case is the practice of any day classes private tuition form and then the hiring of a guide tutor for night study. Only one student receives such practice throughout this study. She reported as she goes to daytime private boarding tuition classes and public school, and then she purchases a guide tutor for her night study. The price to receive such system is high because it is similar to the practice of two private tuition forms by

only one person. Thus, it seems only a few students can do it. The second case is the provision of private boarding tuition by monasteries or social organizations. Their aim is not to make a profit through providing private tuition but to help students and families who have limitations to receive private tuition. Many university teachers, public basic school teachers, and other private tutors are volunteering in such private tuition. Sometimes, the monastic monks in that monastery provide lecture classes if they can. However, such private tuitions are not free for all students who want to receive it. Only those students who have special cases (e.g. orphan) and financial difficulties can access with free of charge or only a limited amount of money. Besides, some of such philanthropic private tuition have a placement test before they receive students. Despite students' limitations to receive paid private tuition forms, such philanthropic boarding tuition forms normally receive students only with high intelligence and hardworking. Because of such limitations, students who receive this form of private tuition are not common although the cost is not high.

In general, private boarding tuition is the most common form of private tuition among Grade 9 students in Kale Township. That form is popular because of its provision of living and learning conditions. As well, the price is reasonable for students and parents. In contrast, one to one private tuition form is the least common form in this study. Although there are different in private tuition forms, all private tuition forms seem to provide not only teaching of school lessons to the students but also guidance in students learning and study time.

### **4.3 Providers of Private Tuition**

The study continues exploring of private tutors in different private tuition forms. According to the survey (see Table 2), not less than half (53.5%) of the private tutors are public school teachers. This shows school teachers are the main providers of private tuition and then, professional private tutors are the second main providers of it. Private tuition providing by university students and teachers is not so significant in this study. This would be because of university teachers and students also have private tuition in their university, and university students normally serve as guide tutors in private boarding tuition instead of private teaching tutors. The other reason why less university students as private tutors in Kale township would be because of the most famous academic achievers often go to study in other big cities (such as Mandalay, Yangon) and current most university students in Kale areas are not high academic achievers in their matriculation examination. So, parents and students do not have much attention on them. However, there would be some students who serve as private tutors. Sometimes,

monastic monks also teach school subjects to students if the private tuition is under their control.

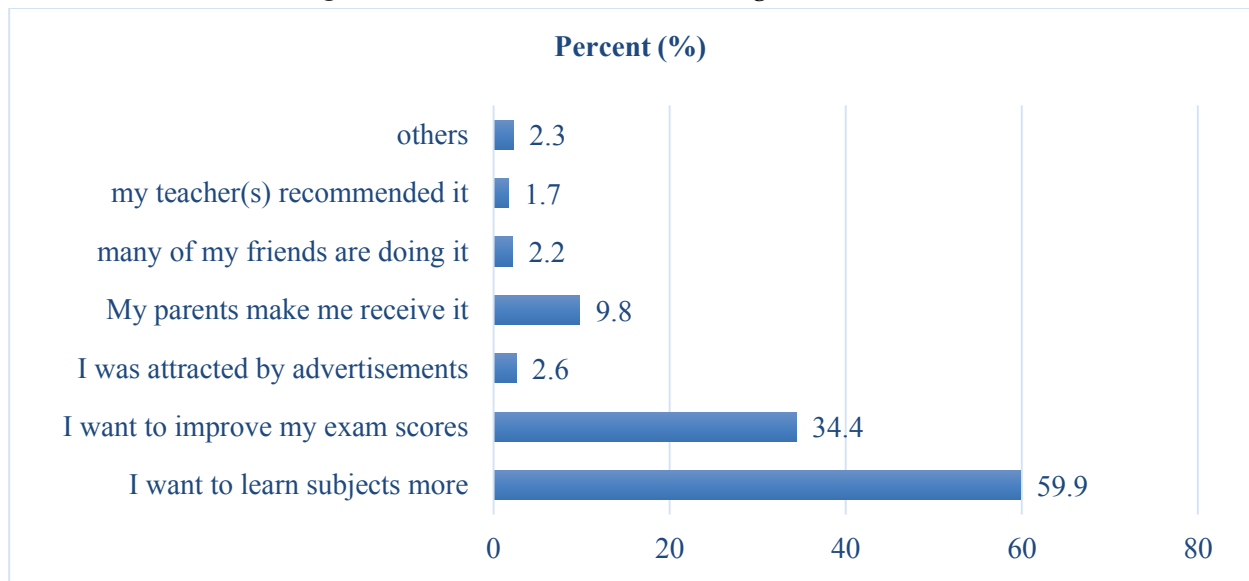
**Table 2: Providers of Private Tuition**

Type of Tutors	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Students' own teachers in school	347	37.3
Other teachers from the same school	118	12.7
Teachers from another school	33	3.5
Professional private tutors	75	8.1
Both the combination of private tutors and school teachers	337	36.2
Included university students and/or lecturers	20	2.1
Others	1	0.1
Missing	40 (4.1%)	

#### 4.4 Reasons for Receiving Private Tuition

Students were asked to describe their intention in receiving private tuition through questionnaire and option spaces are also provided for more reasons. Generally, more than half (60%) of students described that they participate in private tuition in order to learn subjects more. This means students are not totally satisfied with the school teaching, and they seek more teaching and knowledge skills in private tuition. Afterward, hoping to get high exam scores ranks the second common reason for participating in private tuition. According to figure 2, students who receive private tuition because of their parental desires are more than students who receive it because of peer pressure and advertisements by private tuition. Besides, some students described their intention in receiving private tuition as the preparation courses for matriculation examination; to control their laziness for learning; a culture of practice; a supplementary course because of hard to catch up with classmates; because of teachers do not teach well in school and big class size; to be ahead than others; a supporter to get their big dream; and a place which has specific time management skills. In short, some receive private tuition as a habit, while some students receive it with any expectation.

**Figure 2: Main Reasons of Receiving Private Tuition**



#### 4.5 What does Private Tuition Provide to Students?

Beyond students' intention in receiving private tuition, the study explored what students do get in there through interviewing 18 students. The interviewees were coded as N1, N2, N3, ....., N9 for students who did not receive private tuition in Grade 9 and T1, T2, T3, ....., T9 for students who received it. Among them, only N2 and N6 never had any experience of private tuition in their studies while only T8 and T9 started to receive it in Grade 9. It means 88.9% of the interviewees have had experiences of private tuition and 77.8% of them already had experiences of private tuition before they were high school students. Besides, 5 students (T3, T4, T5, T6, and T7) from the interviewees who received private tuition were from different areas of their current schools. They came to study in urban/more developed areas from their villages/areas through receiving private boarding tuition. This shows many students in urban schools are not urban residences and this makes more students in urban than rural areas.

Even though the quantitative data described students' intentions in receiving private tuition are to get more subjects knowledge and teaching skills, interviewed students reported that there is no significant difference in teaching and knowledge skills among school and private tuition. For instance, some students remarked their opinion on students' academic achievements as *"No, school achievement is because of the result of hard working. It is not the result of private tuition"* (N6), and *"There are many students who receive private tuition but poor in school performance. So, it depends on personal hard-working skill; not on private tuition"* (N8). As well, many students perceived that there is no difference in the provision of teaching and knowledge skills among school and private tuition. They expressed their experiences as: *"there is no difference in teaching*

*among school and private tuition. We learn again what we have learned in school” (N9), “No, private tuition and school have the same teachers. It is the same in teaching both in school and private tuition” (T1), and “I think they are the same (teaching skills between school and private tuition)” (T3). Of course, it might be true because most tutors in private tuitions are also from school teachers and it is reasonable to claim the school and private tuition do not have a significant difference in teaching and knowledge skills. In addition, public school teachers would probably have better teaching skills than private professional tutors. Public high school teachers have at least a degree of training in teaching while professional private tutors less likely to have it. Hence, even private tuition provides teaching to students, private tuition seems to have limitation to provide a better teaching and knowledge skills than school.*

If there is no difference in teaching and knowledge skills among school and private tuition, it needs to explore more on the process of private tuition which makes students participate in it. In general, the private teaching processes happen before and after the school hours. Students need to get up about at 4:30 AM and need to study till 10:30 PM. They have two sessions of lecture classes before they go to public school at 9:00 AM and have at least two lecture classes again after school. Afterward, students need to study or do their exercises till 10:30 PM (some do it till 11:00 PM). Student “T2” who receives “*wiin*” tuition remarked as “*we are not boarding tuition. So, our classes are not formal as them. But, we normally have two sessions from 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM in the morning and two sessions from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM in the evening. Then, I go home, have dinner and always study till 10:00 PM*”. In private boarding tuition, student “T7” explains his experience as “*we need to wake up at 4:30 AM and study from 5:00 AM to 6:00 AM. Then, we start lecture classes as 6:00 AM to 7:30 AM for one session, and 7:00 AM to 8:25 AM for another session. Afterward, we have breakfast and go to school. The school ends at 3:30 PM and we have two private tuition classes as from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, and from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Then, we have dinner and, start night study at 7:00 PM. We go to bed at 10:00 PM*”. These are the common process of private tuitions except in large group form. There are just some differences in time duration per class, time to wake up and go to bed. Some private tuitions make students get up at 5:00 AM and go to bed at 11:00 PM, and some of them have lecture classes that take more than 1 hour. As well, guide tutors from private boarding tuition are always with students at lecture classes and study time. Even though one to one and small group private tuition do not have guide tutors, their private tutors serve as both teaching and guide tutors. Similarly, some large group tuitions do not focus on teaching and they emphasize on learning and drilling exercises with private tutors. Most teachers in large group tuition are the same teachers from schools for students, and they just have revision exercises and explanation again some

concepts from school lessons. This means students whomever in private tuition do not merely get teaching and knowledge skills from their private tutors but also guidance in their learning and study time. While the school can provide just subject teachings within their school hours, private tuition can provide both teachings and other services such as guidance in study time. In general, the school has just 7 hours a day with students while almost the rest of the time is under the control of private tuition.

However, students did not seem to totally satisfy with the teaching and knowledge skills of private tuition. For instance, a student remarks her private tutors as *"They are not so helpful in private tuition. They leave the class as soon as they finished their sessions"* (T5). Student "T5" is a student who receives private boarding tuition and she remarks the unreliable of their teaching tutors for their learning. This shows teaching in private boarding tuitions are not the only factor for receiving it although more than two-third of private tuition receivers are in there. The teaching tutors in private boarding tuition just come and teach in their time, and leave the class as soon as they finished their sessions. So, students rarely have time to discuss and learn about problems they encountered in their learning with their teaching tutors. Therefore, it can conclude that even students claimed they want to get more subjects skills and knowledge, it would be a debatable question on whether or not private tuition can really provide better subject teaching skills than school.

Indeed, what the private tuition provides to students and why students are satisfying in it need to explore beyond mere teaching and knowledge skills by the private tutors. It is necessary if private tuition and school do not have significant teaching skills, and private teaching tutors are not also helpful for students. Thus, this study tried to explore more factors which keep students in private tuition in addition to the teaching of lessons. This is because no one will continue to receive private tuition if they cannot find something worthy of them. In this sense, the study found some interrelated factors such as some students cannot learn in their homes because their neighbors are quarreling, their siblings are playing, their parents are talking loudly, there is no one who can help them in their learning difficulties, and/or many reasons. Moreover, many parents also do not have knowledge background and time to look their children's learning. For instance, student "N3" reported as *"my parents are very busy and do not have any knowledge to guide my study. So, they sent me to private tuition"* (N3). Perhaps, some students are lazy and do not want to study if they do not have someone to enforce them. In some cases, students need a learning environment and parents also seek for it. It can be seen in the interviews as *"receiving private tuition is good. We need to learn and study although we don't want to do it"* (N9), and *"my most favorite system in private tuition is their specific timetable of to eat, learn, study and sleep"* (N6). These

highlight factors which attract students in private tuition include the services such as discipline guidelines, specific timetable, and guidance in their learning difficulties. Of course, the living and feeding system in private boarding system are already good services for students from rural/remote or different areas, the additional provision of lecturing and specific disciplines will enrich students' learning. These provisions are favorable not only for rural/remote students to come and receive private tuition in order to enroll in urban/better schools but also for children who have challenges to study at home.

The further service provisions beyond subject teaching might be the leading factors of attracting students and improving their learning in private tuition. In spite of mere teaching in the classroom, many students described their guide tutors' help for their learning improvement. One student expressed his/her learning situation as *"Guide tutors are hovering around us to look whether or not we concentrate on the teaching. So, we pay closer attention in private tuition classes' teachings"* (T3). This short speech remarks about the role of guide tutors in private boarding tuition and highlights their learning improvement because of them. Similarly, students replied the question of to whom they often go for help in their learning difficulties as *"I mostly go for help to my guide tutors"* (T5), and *"my guide tutors give more supports because they are always with us"* (T4). These interviewed notes reveal the importance of guide tutors in private tuition as resource persons for their learning. Such provision in private boarding tuition is adorable for a learning environment. Even though lecture classes in private boarding tuitions are also crowded, they often have guide tutors to support students' individual learning. For instance, there are 22 guide tutors for 193 students in a private tuition received by student "T4". She said as *"in our private tuition, one guide tutor has responsible on 6 students' learning and even he/she can't explain our exercises, he/she guides us to people who can explain it"* (T4). This is a great provision of student-teacher ratio and a student's learning that public school can hardly do it. Other private boarding tuitions also have a similar provision. For instance, private boarding tuition received by student "T7" has 2 guide tutors for 40 students and "T3" has 3 guide tutors for 59 students. It shows private boarding tuition can provide about 1 guide tutor for 20 students. On the other hand, even for the national level in public school, the student-teacher ratio is about 22:1 in high school and most of the sampled schools have 40 to more than 80 students in one class. This means private tuition can provide better personal guidance or face to face teaching to students. Thus, the private tuition seems to have a better supportive learning environment for teaching and learning than school. In addition, a significant ratio of this survey reported that students received private tuition because the school classes were big and they cannot learn effectively.



There were already a small number of students with the teacher(s) in one to one and small group private tuition forms, they would no longer need guide tutors for their learning. Also, their teaching tutors always served them as guide tutors even in their night study time. Moreover, student "T8" described his large group private tuition form as *"we don't have lectures. Our tutors said we will not listen well in school teaching if we have lectures in private tuition. Only if we have some specific problems in doing exercises, we use blackboard for explaining it. In other time, we do our homework and study, and the tutors look for whether or not we get it"* (T8). This means these private tuition forms – one to one, small group, large group and boarding tuition – have further services in students' learning than mere teaching of school lessons or they emphasized on guiding of students' learning instead of preaching school lecture through blackboard.

Therefore, the study can conclude that students do not get just mere teaching and knowledge skills from their private tuitions. Even private tuition seems incapable of providing more subjects and teaching skills than school, it seems to have better services for students' learning environment. It is also doubtful if someone claimed private tuition can provide better subject and knowledge skills than public school. However, private tuition likely to have better supportive environment such as specific timetable, living condition, feeding system and guidance for learning difficulties than public school and home. On the other hand, as the urbanization process, people often seek for better welfares, living and other social services since the early human being. People move and seek for a place where more and better resources are easily available for them. They believe that such factors are necessary for their personal development and future life. Thus, they invest their efforts such as money and time in it. As well, parents and students conceive services provided in private tuition such as teaching, guidance, specific rules and other supports are necessary for learning and their future.

## **5. Limitation and Recommendation for further study**

First of all, although this research aimed to give insight from what the private tuition provides to students instead of what students intense to get from it, the study cannot observe and interview the private tuition centers and providers. However, this should not mean the study is totally from the wrong approach because students are the participators in private tuition and their experiences are also worth than what the private tuition pretend to provide to students. As well, this research is just the reflections of Grade 9 students in Kale Township and all data are from their perspectives. Hence, it needs to be aware of too much generalization in interpreting the data. Nonetheless, the findings from this study can apply in similar contexts within

Myanmar. Also, the different forms of private tuition and their characteristics in this research can apply as underlying theory for other research on private tuition in Myanmar. Further studies are strongly recommended to explore more data through different perspectives and contexts. Such broad scene finding will better support policy implementation for the development of private tuition and its impacts on the public education system.

## 6. Conclusion

The development of private tuition has been significant not only in Kale Township and Myanmar but also around the nations. The study tried to explore what the private tuition provides to students beyond the scale and intentions in receiving it. Through the survey and interview, the study can generalize that more than 90% of high school students have had experiences of different forms of private tuition and about 80% already participated in it before there were in high school. Besides, 88% of Grade 9 students receive private tuition in this study while Gibson (1992) reported 91% of high school students in Yangon (Rangoon) Region were in private tuition. Despite the time variation among these two studies, it seems about 90% of high school students in Myanmar receive private tuition. However, it needs to explore in the broader contexts to talk about the nation though Myanmar is so diverse in geographical, economic development, ethnicity and religious natures.

Private tuition forms vary from country to country and/or region to region as: one to one, small group, large group or private tuition provided by school teachers, private tutors, university students and lecturers, business groups, correspondence courses, broadcasting system, and internet tutoring (Bray, 2009; Bray & Lykins, 2012; Lee et al., 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2016). As well, Myanmar seems to have a common private tuition form called private boarding tuition that is rare to see in another context. Besides, it is the most common form among the participants and more than two-thirds of private tuition receivers in this study are in private boarding tuition. The private boarding tuition has two kinds of private tutors known as guide tutors and teaching tutors. All private tuition forms in this study similarly provide guidance in students' learning or study time beyond the mere teaching of school lessons through the board.

In general, students showed strong expectation to learn subjects more in private tuition, but many students reported there is not a difference in academic teaching between private tuition and school. As the school classrooms are crowded, many boarding tuition classes are also crowded and many of their teachers are not so helpful for face to face learning and discussion both in private tuition and school. In addition,

more than half of private tutors are from public schools, and students remarked that private tuition does not have significant subject teaching skills than school. However, students highlighted their preferences on a specific timetable, reinforcement, and guidance in private tuition. This would link to the new institutional perspective on educational development while Davies, Quirke, and Aurini (2006) argued that the new development of educational institution (e.g. private tuition) can better provide face to face conversation, personal guidance and more suitable environment for individual's learning. Stevenson and Baker (1992) also posited that the intention of investing money in private tuition includes having a better place for students where learning resources (e.g. teaching, guidance, reinforcement) are easily available. Therefore, the study concludes that students and parents are buying environmental services for learning in private tuition in addition to the teaching of school subjects. As well, policymakers in education need to concern such diverse needs for students' learning beyond mere subject teachings on board.

## References

1. Bray, M. (2009). *Confronting the shadow education system: What government policies for what private tutoring?* Paris, UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
2. Bray, M., & Kwo, O. (2014). *Regulating private tutoring for public good: policy options for supplementary education in Asia*. The Hong Kong University; Comparative Education Research Centre. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2014.961629>
3. Bray, M., & Kwo, O. (2015). Designing and implementing mixed approaches to shadow education research: Experiences and lessons in Hong Kong. In M. Bray, O. Kwo, & B. Jokić (Eds.). *Researching private supplementary tutoring: Methodological lessons from diverse cultures* (p.3). The University of Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), The University of Kong Kong, and Dordrecht: Springer. ©CERC
4. Bray, M., Kwo, O., & Jokić, B. (2015). *Researching private supplementary tutoring methodological lessons from diverse cultures*. The University of Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), The University of Kong Kong, and Dordrecht: Springer. ©CERC
5. Bray, M., & Lykins, C. (2012). Shadow education: Private supplementary tutoring and its implications for policy makers in Asia. *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-012-9324-2>

6. Cayubid, R. F. O., Castor, J. Y. S., Divina, E. J. S., Francia, R. M. S., Nolasso, R. T. P., Villamiel, A. J. E., Vilorio, A. I. S., & Zarraga, M. T. G. (2014). A Q analysis on the impact of shadow education on the academic life of high school students. *Psychological Studies*, 59 (3), 252-259. doi: 10.1007/s12646-014-0260-z
7. Cheo, R., & Quah, E. (2005). Mothers, maids and tutors: An empirical evaluation of their effect on children's academic grades in Singapore. *Education Economics*, 13(3), 269-285. doi: 10.1080/09645290500073746
8. Dang, H., & Rogers, F. H. (2008). How to interpret the growing phenomenon of private tutoring: Human capital deepening, Inequality increasing, or waste of resources? *World Bank Research Observer*, 23(2), 161-200. doi: 10.1093.wbro.lkn004
9. Davies, S., Quirke, L., & Aurini, J. (2006). The new institutionalism goes to the market: The challenge of rapid growth in private K-12 education. In H. Meyer & B. Rowan (Eds.). *The new institutionalism in education*. State University of New York Press, Albany.
10. Gibson, S. (1992). *Non-government expenditure on education*. Working Paper Series: No. 4.3. Education Sector Study Project. Yangon: Myanmar Education Research Bureau. Retrieved in 30 September, 2016 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001440/144024eo.pdf>
11. Ireson, J., & Rushforth, K. (2011). Private tutoring at transition points in the English education system: its nature, extent and purpose. *Research Papers in Education*, 26(1), 1-19. doi: 10.1080/02671520903191170
12. Jheng, Y.-J. (2015). The influence of private tutoring on middle-class students' use of in class time in formal schools in Taiwan. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 40, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.11.019>
13. Kobakhidze, M. N. (2014). Corruption risks of private tutoring: case of Georgia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 34(4), 455-475. doi: 10.1080/02188791.2014.963506
14. Lee, S. K. (2014). *Shadow education in the southeast of south korea: Mothers' experiences and perspectives of shadow education* (Order No. 3643637). Available from Education Collection; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I. (1624878494). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1624878494?accountid=14548>
15. Lee, C. J., Lee, H., & Jang, H. M. (2010). The history of policy responses to shadow education in South Korea: Implications for the next cycle of policy responses. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 11(1), 97-108. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-009-9064-6>
16. MOE (2017). [Educational development of newly government

- 
- within one year]. Retrieved in 4 April, 2017 from <http://www.moe.gov.mm/content?q=content/>
17. National Curriculum Review in Myanmar (2013). Technical input for CESR working group. JICA Study Team; Pyuichi Sagiyama, Curriculum and textbook specialist. PADECO Co., Ltd. Retrieved from <http://www.cesrmm.org/index.php/en/documents/category/17-basic-education?download=31:cesrphase1nationalcurriculum-final1jica>
  18. National EFA Review Report (2014). Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Myanmar. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar: Ministry of Education.
  19. Paviot, L., Heinsohn, N., & Korkman, J. (2008). Extra tuition in Southern and Eastern Africa: Coverage, growth, and linkages with pupil achievement. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28(2), 149–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2007.02.003>
  20. Silova, I. (2010). Private tutoring in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: policy choices and implications. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 40(3), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920903361926>
  21. Stevenson, D. L., & Baker, D. P. (1992). Shadow education and allocation in formal schooling: transition to university in Japan. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 97(6), 1639–1657.
  22. Thapa, A. (2011). *Does private school competition improve public school performance? The case of Nepal* (Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, USA). Retrieved from <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:132305>
  23. Zhang, W. (2013). Private supplementary tutoring received by grade 9 students in Chongqing, China: determinants of demand, and policy implications [Doctoral Dissertation]. University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong SAR. [http://dx.doi.org/10.5353/th\\_b5177326](http://dx.doi.org/10.5353/th_b5177326)
  24. Zhang, W., & Bray, M. (2016). Micro-neoliberalism in China: public-private interactions at the confluence of mainstream and shadow education. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 1-19. doi:10.1080/02680939.2016.1219769
  25. Zhang, Y., & Liu, J. (2016). The effectiveness of private tutoring in China with a focus on class-size. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 46, 35-42. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.11.006
  26. Zheng, P. (2015). *The relationship between shadow education and mathematics achievement in the united states and china (shanghai)* (Order No. 1594796). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I. (1710097681). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1710097681?accountid=14548>

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).